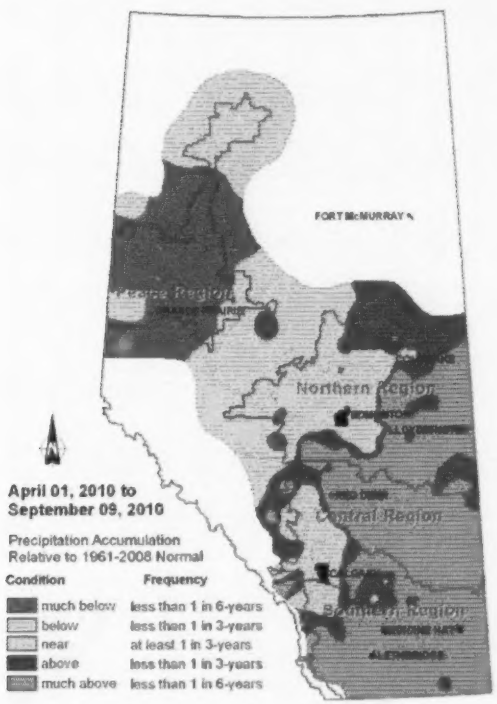
Crop Conditions as of September 9, 2010

Unsettled weather conditions over the past two weeks, with a combination of cool temperatures and frequent rain, have further delayed maturity, and thus harvesting, of most crops. Several hailstorms have also been reported across the province, with damage varying from moderate in the Southern Region, to severe in the North East, North West and Peace Regions. Cool overnight temperatures have increased the threat of a killing frost, with localized light frost already reported in a number of areas. Table 1 below presents estimates of harvest progress by region, while Table 2 is the percentage of crops in the swath.

Provincially, eight per cent of the 2010 crop has been harvested, compared with three per cent two weeks ago, and 35 per cent at this time in most years. Additionally, 19 per cent of the crop is in the swath, and 73 per cent is still standing. The Peace Region, where dry conditions accelerated crop maturity, is most advanced, with 25 per cent of combining complete. Elsewhere in the province, crop maturity is two to three weeks behind normal, and many farmers in the Southern and Central Regions are desiccating to try to even out maturity.

Overall, provincial average yields for major grains now in the bin are estimated to be slightly above their 10-year averages. However, for the majority of crops still standing, yields and quality will largely depend on receiving warm, dry weather over the next few weeks.

Harvest of second cut hay is estimated to be 37 per cent complete on dryland, and 75 per cent complete under irrigation. Haying operations across the province have been severely hampered by frequent rainfall, cool temperatures and poor drying conditions. Per acre hay yields, with varying quality, are close to their 10-year averages. Yields in the Peace Region have suffered from a lack of moisture, and are well below average.



Pasture conditions in the province are rated as 15 per cent poor, 28 per cent fair, 42 per cent good and 15 per cent excellent. Higher than normal levels of disease (e.g., sclerotinia, root rot, black leg) are being reported in canola crops in the Central and North East regions.

Table 1: Alberta Crop Harvest Progress, as of September 9, 2010

	South	Central	N. East	N. West	Peace	Alberta
Spring Wheat	5.5%	2.4%	0.9%	4.3%	36.6%	**7.5%**
Durum Wheat	6.2%	4.3%	0.0%	-	-	**5.6%**
Oats	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	21.0%	**4.5%**
Barley	8.4%	4.1%	0.5%	2.9%	30.3%	**6.5%**
Canola	9.1%	2.7%	0.0%	0.1%	10.2%	**4.2%**
Dry Peas	57.3%	38.1%	48.1%	76.2%	80.0%	**55.5%**
All Crops	**9.4%**	**3.8%**	**2.2%**	**3.0%**	**24.5%**	**7.8%**

Source: Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development

Table 2: Alberta Crops in the Swath, as of September 9, 2010

	South	Central	N. East	N. West	Peace	Alberta
Spring Wheat	8.6%	7.5%	9.5%	3.2%	4.5%	**7.6%**
Durum Wheat	8.5%	9.3%	30.0%	-	-	**8.9%**
Oats	10.2%	2.4%	2.8%	3.2%	3.5%	**3.6%**
Barley	15.9%	6.2%	5.1%	5.1%	4.1%	**9.0%**
Canola	29.5%	30.5%	51.9%	66.6%	73.8%	**52.2%**
Dry Peas	1.5%	1.5%	3.1%	0.0%	7.8%	**2.7%**
All Crops	**13.0%**	**11.2%**	**21.1%**	**24.4%**	**33.4%**	**18.6%**

Source: Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development

Our thanks to Alberta Agricultural Fieldmen, staff of AFSC and the Alberta Ag-Info Centre for their partnership and contribution to the Alberta Crop Reporting Program.

REGIONAL ASSESSMENTS:

The 2010 Alberta Crop Report Series continues to provide summaries for the following five regions:

Region One: Southern (Strathmore, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Foremost)

- Cool temperatures and frequent rainfall have further hampered harvest, which was already two to three weeks behind due to slow maturing of crops. Some light frosts have been reported, although they have done little damage, as well as several hailstorms. A larger number of fields are being desiccated to speed ripening, and more crops are being swathed before combining. Overall, about 13 per cent of crops are in swath, and just over nine per cent have been combined. Harvest of specialty crops has also been delayed; with the furthest advanced being dry peas, at just over 57 per cent combined. Potatoes and dry beans are mostly still in the field, and the sugar beet harvest has not yet begun.
- Second cut hay operations are nearly complete, with the majority of hay rated as good to excellent quality. Pastures are mostly in good to excellent condition, with just over 13 per cent rated as poor to fair.

Region Two: Central (Rimbey, Airdrie, Coronation, Oyen)

- Cool weather, coupled with frequent rainstorms in parts of the region, has further slowed crop development, and frost has been reported in a number of areas. Producers are desiccating crops to speed up maturity. About 11 per cent of major crops are in swath, and about four per cent have been combined. The majority of specialty crops are still standing, although just over 38 per cent of dry peas have been combined.
- About one-third of the second cut of hay has been baled. Cool weather and rain have generally hampered operations. Quality is rated at 12 per cent poor, 31 per cent fair, 51 per cent good, and six per cent excellent. Pasture is rated at nine per cent poor, 39 per cent fair, 35 per cent good, and 17 per cent excellent.

Region Three: North East (Smoky Lake, Vermilion, Camrose, Provost)

- Frequent rain showers and cooler temperatures the first week of September have interrupted harvest in most parts of the region. Frost has been reported in some areas, as well as hail damage. Overall, 21 per cent of major crops have been swathed, the majority being canola, at about 52 per cent. Only two per cent of all crops have been combined, mostly dry peas, at 48 per cent. While 30 per cent of durum wheat has been swathed, none has been combined. There are reports of diseases in many canola and some cereal fields.
- About 42 per cent of second cut hay operations are done, with rain showers and cool temperatures hampering completion. Quality is rated at 12 per cent poor, 43 per cent fair, 37 per cent good, and eight per cent excellent. Pasture is rated at 63 per cent good and 15 per cent excellent, with 22 per cent in the poor to fair range.

Region Four: North West (Barrhead, Edmonton, Leduc, Drayton Valley, Athabasca)

- Some progress with harvest had been made in the northeastern portion of the region; however, rain last week brought operations to a halt. Constant showers and cool damp conditions have also stalled harvest in the rest of the region. Hailstorms in the Athabasca and Thorhild areas during the last week of August caused some severe damage. Just over 24 per cent of the major crops are in the swath, mostly canola, at 67 per cent. About 76 per cent of dry peas and 50 per cent of fall rye have been combined. Of the rest, 93 per cent of spring wheat, 92 per cent of barley, 96 per cent of oats, 77 per cent of winter wheat, and 95 per cent of mixed grains are still standing.
- Second cut hay is about 18 per cent done, with rain and poor drying conditions hampering completion. Quality is rated at six per cent poor, 19 per cent fair, 51 per cent good and 24 per cent excellent.
- Pasture is rated as three per cent poor, 42 per cent fair, 48 per cent good and seven per cent excellent.

Region Five: Peace River (Fairview, Falher, Grande Prairie, Valleyview)

- Harvest, which was well underway throughout the region, has been hampered by rain during the past two weeks. West central areas reported one to three inches of rain, as well as hailstorms which caused moderate to severe damage, particularly to swathed canola. About 37 per cent of spring wheat, 85 per cent of winter wheat, and 80 per cent of dry peas have been combined, while 74 per cent of canola has been swathed and 10 per cent combined. Nearly 66 per cent of barley and 76 per cent of oats remain standing.
- Second cut haying operations are 18 per cent complete, with drier areas reporting very low yields. Quality is rated as 17 per cent poor, three per cent fair, 48 per cent good and 32 per cent excellent.
- Conditions remain extremely dry in south and central areas of the region. Overall, surface moisture conditions are rated at 52 per cent poor, 26 per cent fair, 16 per cent good and six per cent excellent. Subsurface moisture is rated at 76 per cent poor, 14 per cent fair, eight per cent good and two per cent excellent.

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